

Dear Honorable Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Adriana López de Victoria and I am from Storrs, CT. I am writing to you in support of HB 5285, An Act Concerning the Public School Curriculum. Along with many important provisions about financial literacy and teaching African American, Puerto Rican, and other history, it also requires Next Gen Science Standards based climate education in all public schools.

I myself am Puerto Rican and I firmly believe that this bill is necessary to increase tolerance and inclusivity in all aspects of the words. By teaching my history, and that of African Americans and other marginalized but prevalent communities in the state of Connecticut, you make our voices heard and you acknowledge us as a part of US history. Additionally, I, like many others, did not learn about climate change or the severity of the climate crisis in school. In order to become educated, I had to turn to social media, which can at times be flooded with misinformation and unnecessary debate on an issue that should be simple: our planet is dying and we are accelerating this demise. Having a climate education built into my curriculum would have made it so much easier for me to find accurate, straightforward information in order to change my habits and become a more ecologically conscious resident of this planet.

Furthermore, climate education is critical, because as the climate crisis accelerates and worsens, it is becoming clearer that while we are all affected, this issue is not impacting everyone equally. The impacts felt by marginalized and vulnerable groups are and will continue to be far greater and it is critical that the public be educated on these facts.

The climate crisis is recognized as a threat multiplier. Black, Indigenous, Asian and other people of color have been pushed to reside in locations that are more heavily polluted and are more vulnerable to climate related natural disasters such as flooding and hurricanes.

Youth will be inheriting the climate crisis and therefore deserve to learn about this reality and be empowered to understand that most of the solutions to this existential threat already exist. Last year, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that 78% of registered voters support schools teaching students about the climate crisis. With public support growing and the climate crisis worsening, the time is now to mandate climate education for our students.

As such, I ask that you vote yes and support HB 5285.

Regards,
Adriana López de Victoria